

Couple find success with first-aid kits for kids

By Georgann Yara

SPECIAL FOR THE ABG

What started with a little bee sting has swelled into a flourishing business venture for Cave Creek mother of three, Richelle Nassos.

Her oldest son, now 10, was a toddler at the time when Nassos attempted to calm him down and wipe his tears, while fighting with a cumbersome first-aid kit.

"Kids are going to get hurt, and all you want to do is make the owie go away," Nassos, 38, said.

Knowing millions of other parents find themselves in the same position, Nassos and husband Pete, 36, put their heads together to find a solution.

Two years of hard work and focus-group research produced the Medibag in late 2005. The user-friendly first-aid kit is packed with child-friendly bandages, gauze pads, tweezers, ointments, gloves and other key items.

Me4Kidz, LLC

Employees: 72.

Stats: Me4Kidz products are available in more than 4,000 stores and 14 countries, including Australia, Dubai and South Africa.

Online: www.me4kidz.com.

Details: 480-444-2332 or info@me4kidz.com.

It also includes colorful stickers to keep a child busy while Mom or Dad flips through the simple first-aid guide.

The Medibag was the first of four products to come from the Nassoses' company, Me4Kidz, which is short for Medical Emergencies for Kids.

The bright-red kit caught on with families and garnered national accolades from pediatricians and parenting organizations. Appearances at children's expos increased the company's visibility, capturing the atten-



PAT SHANNAHAN/ARIZONA BUSINESS GAZETTE

Richelle and Pete Nassos came up with the idea for Medibag, held by son Luke, years ago after helping son Cody with a bee sting.

tion of celebrities such as Kelly Preston, Melania Trump and Brooke Burke.

"We're humbled by it. All we wanted was to make a difference, give something back, help parents and children," said Nassos, speaking from her home office.

In addition to the Medibag,

Me4Kidz has the Medibuddy, a travel-sized version of the Medibag; Medibag 4 Petz, a first-aid kit for pets; and Diaper Bag Buddy, a travel-sized starter kit for new parents that includes diaper-rash cream, baby wipes, baby wash and other organic and natural products.

The Medibag retails for

\$14.99, and the Medibuddy and Diaper Bag Buddy are \$4.99 apiece. The Medibag 4 Petz can be purchased for \$19.99.

Products are available at stores including Costco; Target; Bed, Bath and Beyond; and Babies R Us. They can also be purchased online.

Even with Me4Kidz's success, not much has changed.

The couple raise their three children, ages 10, 3½, and 2 months, and continue to run every aspect of the business — from customer service to accounting — from home.

Their staff includes 70 adults with disabilities who assemble the kits in their Glendale warehouse. Ten percent of each sale goes toward organizations that support the disabled community, they said.

All products and their components are made in the United States, an objective Nassos was never willing to compromise.

When asked what's the key to their success, Nassos said, "Tremendous hard work and faith in the man upstairs."